

## Remarks in Pensacola, Florida August 10, 2004

*The President.* Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. What a great welcome. I'm so honored. You know, you're in good country when you've got a guy holding a sign up that says "Bubbas for Bush." No, the heart and soul of America is right here in Pensacola, Florida.

It's an honor to land Air Force One at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, right here in the cradle of naval aviation. And it's an honor to stand with one of the really fine naval aviators in our Nation's history, Senator John McCain. Forty-six years ago this month, Ensign John McCain reported for duty in Pensacola. He trained to fly here; he launched a life of true service to America that continues to this day. As a naval officer, as a Congressman, as a United States Senator from Arizona, John McCain has embodied honor and integrity, courage and strength. And I'm honored to have him by my side.

We're kicking off a bus trip. We're starting here, and we're heading east across the panhandle of this important State. I'm asking for the vote. Everywhere we're going the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, and with your help, Dick Cheney and I will be honored to serve this country for 4 more years.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* I wish Laura was here today. She is a wonderful wife, a great mom, and she's doing a fabulous job as this country's First Lady. I'll give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. Listen, I recognize he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him

because of his experience and his sound judgment and his ability to do the job.

I've been looking around for the Governor. [*Laughter*] I had a few words for the Governor. Actually, I saw him over the weekend. His son George P. got married. Yes, it was a great wedding. He's working. He's doing what you want him to do. He's working on behalf of all the people of Florida. I'm proud of the job Jeb is doing as the Governor of this vital State.

I'm honored that your very fine Congressman, Jeff Miller, is traveling with us today. He's doing a heck of a job for the people of the Panhandle.

I want to thank all the local and State officials who are here. Thanks for serving your State and our country. I appreciate Joe Scarborough. I'm glad to know he's still standing and making a living. I kissed his little girl on the way down the stairs. Fortunately, she's got her mom's looks. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Ricky Skaggs. I'm honored Ricky took time to come over and sing for you all.

I'm honored to be with the men and women who wear our uniform, proud to be here. I want to thank all the veterans who are here today. I want to thank you for setting such a good example.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Those are the people who are going to put up the signs and make the phone calls and register the voters. I'm here to ask for your help. Not only I want your vote, I'd like for your help. I'd like you to go to your neighbors—listen, find those discerning Democrats and wise independents as well as our fellow Republicans, and urge them to do their duty on Election Day. See, we have a duty in this country to participate when it comes to voting time. And when you get them headed towards the polls, give them a nudge our way.

Every incumbent who asks for the vote has to answer an essential question, why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past years, Americans have been through a lot together, a whole lot, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who will best lead our Nation forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have much more to do to move this country forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make this country safer, to make our economy stronger, and to make the future better and brighter for every single citizen.

From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading peace, we've made much progress, and there's more work to be done. We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America.

Remember, when we came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar. We believe in accountability because we want to know whether or not our children are learning to read and write. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in challenging the status quo when the status quo is failing the children of this country. Today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. There's more work to do. The world is changing, and the jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level skills. We're going to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand math and science education so our

young people can compete in the high-tech world. We'll expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into our classrooms. With 4 more years, we will help a rising generation gain the skills and confidence to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember the past debates. Leaders of both political parties had promised prescription drug coverage in campaign after campaign. We got the job done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

To help more people get access to quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their own health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

This world is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. But today, most of the new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the same discounts big companies are able to do.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that raise the cost of health care. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. *[Laughter]* I made my choice: I'm going to continue

to work with the United States Congress for medical liability reform.

We'll do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We will expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We'll do more to make this economy stronger. We've come through a lot. We've come through a recession and corporate scandals and terrorist attacks. We've overcome these obstacles because of the hard work of the American people. We've got great workers. We've got great farmers. We've got great ranchers. We've got great entrepreneurs. I also think one of the reasons we've come through this tough period is because of well-timed tax cuts. We didn't try to pick winners or losers. We did it the fair way: If you paid taxes, you got relief. That's a fair way for tax relief. The tax relief helped families with children. The tax relief helped married couples. I mean, what kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? We ought to be encouraging marriage in our society. We helped our small businesses. And this time, the check really was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, we've added about a million—1.5 million new jobs since last year, last August. The unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent, well below the national average of the seventies, eighties, and nineties. Because we acted, Florida has added nearly 300,000 jobs since the end of 2001. Florida's unemployment rate is now 4.7 percent. When it comes to creating jobs for American workers, here in Florida you have proved we're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

There's more work to do. We need to make our economy more job-friendly, America's workplaces more family-friendly.

To keep American jobs here in America, regulations must be reasonable and must be fair. Many of you small-business owners know what I'm talking about when it comes to regulations. I can't guarantee anybody in Washington has ever read the forms you filled out. *[Laughter]* To keep jobs here in America, we must reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits and enact tort reform. To keep American jobs in America, to keep American jobs here in our country, we must not overspend your money. And we will keep your taxes low.

Listen, to keep jobs here, we must not become economic isolationists. We must be bold about our ability to compete in the world. I believe America's workers and farmers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair. To keep jobs here, we've got to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We're going to offer American workers a lifetime of learning. And to be aggressive in helping them get the training they need for the jobs of the future at places like our community colleges—the education training they offer can be a bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

You know what else we need to do? We need to make sure our families have something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with your kids, time to volunteer in your community, time to take care of your parents, time to go back to school. I'm going to work with Congress to enact comp-time and flex-time to help American families better juggle the demands of the workplace.

When you give us 4 more years, this economy is going to be stronger, more small businesses, better and higher-paying jobs. And America will continue to lead the world with the world's strongest economy.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

See, the world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base for Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And thanks to the United States and thanks to members of our coalition, many young girls now go to school for the first time in Afghanistan.

Because we acted, America and the world are safer. Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists. Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of

suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. One of the lessons of September the 11th is that America must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. We saw a threat. My administration looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. The United States Congress looked at the same intelligence—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion.

We went to the United Nations, which looked at the intelligence and demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, or face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. He deceived the weapons inspectors. So I had a choice to make: either forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman who hated America, or defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we expected to find, removing Saddam Hussein from power was the right thing to do. Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction. And he could have passed that capability on to terrorist enemies. After September the 11th, that was a chance we could not afford to take. And America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

And now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and almost 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, Senator Kerry now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we

know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank Senator Kerry for clearing that up—although there are still 84 days left in the campaign.

We have more to do. I'm seeking the office because we must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat the terror. There's 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I know you join me in thanking the leaders of those countries who have committed their troops to peace and freedom around the world. We'll continue to strengthen our alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I'll never turn over national—America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. Listen, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders. These are people who are willing to listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. The moms and dads of Afghanistan and Iraq want their children to grow up in a peaceful and hopeful society. That's what they want. People of Afghanistan and Iraq are beginning to make the hard work of going from tyranny to freedom. More and more troops are stepping up in Iraq—Iraqis saying, "What can I do to secure my country so my family can grow up in a peaceful world?"

The people of these countries can count on us. When we acted to protect our own

security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to liberty. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. And anytime—and those who wear our Nation's uniform deserve the full support of our Nation's Government.

Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against the legislation. And 2 of those 12 Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote this way: "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] That's not the way they talk here in the Panhandle of Florida. He's had some different explanations. He said he was proud of his vote, and then he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. [Laughter] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness, resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in their neighborhood, a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. See, free nations do not export terror.

Free nations enhance the dreams of their citizens. Free nations are peaceful nations.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes our country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the highest values of our own country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There's enemies who still hate us, and they're plotting. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. The logic is upsidedown. It shows a dangerous misunderstanding of the enemy we face. During the nineties, these terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us—long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It is wrong to blame America for the anger and evil of the killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back; we defeat terrorists by fighting back.

I agree with the conclusion the 9/11 Commission has said: Because of the actions we have taken since September the 11th, our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. I understand that. The way to make this country more secure is to be on the offense, is to find these terrorists and to bring the enemies to justice. And the way to make this country more secure is to start the hard process of reform.

We've transformed our defenses. We created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give our law enforcement officers tools to track terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We're already taking action on a large majority of the 9/11 Commission Report. And we've got more to do to better secure our ports and borders and to train our first-respond-

ers, to dramatically improve intelligence gathering capability.

Today I nominated a fine Floridian, Congressman Porter Goss, to head the Central Intelligence Agency. And we'll work with Congress to create a position of the National Intelligence Director so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and at home.

These reforms aren't going to be easy. Reform is never easy in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests there, people who are willing to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform. You've got to be able to get the job done. See, when it came to reforming schools, provide excellent education for our children, we got the job done, and results matter. When it came to health care reforms to give our families more access and more choices, we're getting the job done, and results matter. When it came to improving our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland, when it comes to spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

Listen, we're living in changing times. These are changing times, and they're exciting times. And Government needs to stand side by side with the American people during these changing times. Do you know what that says to me? It says to me, we've got to continue to promote an ownership society in America. We want you to own and control your own health care accounts, so that if you go from one job to the next, the health care account is yours and stays with you.

You know, I'm worried about younger workers in America. I'm worried about whether or not the Social Security system is fiscally sound enough for our younger workers. Old guys like me and McCain, we're set when it comes to Social Security. But to make sure the Social Security system works, we've got to let our younger workers have an option of taking some of their own money and establishing a personal savings

account that they can pass from one generation to the next.

I'll tell you, I love the fact that more people now own their home in America than ever before. We love homeownership in my administration. I met Jack and Julie Broomes behind stage. They said, "This year, thanks to your tax relief, we were able to buy a home." What a fantastic thought, to have that good family open their door and say, "Welcome to my house."

We believe in ownership in this administration. We want more people owning their small business. I love the fact that more minority—minorities are owning their own business. It's a hopeful sign for America. In a changing world, one way to help the American people is to promote an ownership society. When you own something you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In this world of rapid change, there's going to be some things that won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. We believe in the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We honor the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of our country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your

soul. Listen, if you're worried about the quality of the education in this community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

The strength of this country is the hearts and souls of our citizens; that's the strength of America. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to rally the armies of compassion and call upon people to help solve some of the most difficult problems of our society. Government can hand out money; it can't put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around a lonely heart and says, "I love you. What can I do to help you?" I'm running for 4 more years to continue to call upon the great strength of America so we can change our country, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time when we need firm resolve and clear vision. See, none of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. I remember the people in hardhats yelling, "Whatever it takes." I remember walking the ropeline. A guy grabbed me by his arm. He had just been searching in the rubble for a loved one. He said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, that fellow and the people searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking how best to keep America safe. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

We have come through a lot together. We've done hard work. We're moving this country forward. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled this great State and our wonderful country asking for the vote, and I made a pledge to my fellow Americans. I said if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which

I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

May God bless you. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. at the Pensacola Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; former Representative Joe Scarborough of Florida; entertainer Ricky Skaggs; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

## Remarks in a Discussion at Okaloosa-Walton College in Niceville, Florida *August 10, 2004*

*The President.* Thank you all very much. Let's get started here. We'd better get started before all the oxygen leaves. [Laughter] Thanks for coming. I'm on a bus tour today. You know why? I think you have to ask for the vote if you're running for office, and I'm here to ask for the vote. That's what I'm doing.

I'm here to tell you there's more to do. We've done a lot, but there's more to do. I have a reason for running, and I'm going to share some of those reasons with you in a little bit. But first, I want to thank you all for coming. I'm here for another reason, and that's to ask for your help. I need your help to get people registered to vote. Listen, there's a lot of people for us out there. If that many people are standing in the rain, it means we got a pretty good shot here in the Panhandle.

But I can't win it without your help. And so I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors. See, I believe everybody has a duty to vote. I believe that's a—you know, the other day in Afghanistan they were talking about, "Oh, maybe they're not too interested in voting." And

I think there was maybe 3 or 4 million had registered to vote. And the Taliban drug some women out of a bus and killed them because they were involved in the electoral process, and a lot of people say, "Well, gosh, that's going to discourage people from doing their duty, from participating in a free society." Now there is over 8 million people who've registered to vote in Afghanistan.

It's an amazing story, isn't it? It's an amazing story how people respond when given a chance to exercise their—what we believe are their God-given rights as free people. We need to do the same thing here in America. So I'm here to ask you to get your fellow citizens to participate. Of course, once you get them headed to the polls, I've got a suggestion on who they might be for. [Laughter] And that's what we're going to talk about today.

I'm proud of brother Jeb. I had the honor of spending the weekend with him. His oldest son, George P., got married, and the father of the groom handled his duties perfectly. [Laughter] He's a great Governor